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AIRFORCE FOR HQ USAF/ASX AND ASXP
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DIA FOR LEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/12/2019
TAGS: [KACT](#) [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [US](#) [START](#)
SUBJECT: START FOLLOW-ON NEGOTIATIONS, GENEVA
(SFO-GVA-VII): (U) REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE-011, MODIFIED
PROCEDURES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF MOBILE LAUNCHERS OF
INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES (ICBMS)

REF: A. STATE 99070 (SFO-V GUIDANCE-003-PART 1 OF 2)
[1](#)B. STATE 99072 (SFO-V GUIDANCE-003-PART 2 IOF 2)
[1](#)C. STATE 108618 (SFO-VI GUIDANCE-002)
[1](#)D. GENEVA 918 (SFO-GVA-VI-004)
[1](#)E. GENEVA 914 (SFO-GVA-VI-016)
[1](#)F. GENEVA 951 (SFO-GVA-VI-024)

Classified By: A/S Rose E. Gottemoeller, United States
START Negotiator. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is SFO-GVA-VI-056 - REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE-011.

SUMMARY AND GUIDANCE REQUESTED

[1](#)2. (S) U.S.-proposed elimination procedures for mobile launchers of ICBMs are specific and require inspectors on site to observe the final cut of the elimination process for the launcher. The Russian side argues that these procedures for mobile launchers of ICBMs are overly burdensome to the Russian Federation and excessive.

[1](#)3. (S) In an effort to find common ground for negotiation of mobile ICBM launchers, the delegation members have developed an alternative approach for conversion and elimination of mobile ICBM launchers. The alternate approach would provide for more stringent elimination procedures for the mobile ICBM launchers that could be verified by NTM only, and adds a new conversion procedure designed to allow the converting Party

to render the launcher incapable of launching an ICBM, but in a manner permitting the remaining vehicle to be used for purposes not inconsistent with the treaty. The procedures for the conversion of mobile ICBM launchers align more closely with other conversion procedures in the U.S.-proposed protocol. The remaining vehicle would be subject to inspection to preclude reconversion in a manner similar to that for converted heavy bombers.

¶4. (S) Background and analysis is in paragraphs 5-10. Split recommendation is in Paragraph 11. Guidance requested is in paragraph 12.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

¶5. (S) U.S.-proposed elimination procedures for mobile ICBM launchers are very specific and require inspectors on-site to observe the final cut of the elimination process (i.e., cutting off the mountings for the stabilizing jacks, cutting off the mounting for the erector-launcher mechanism, and severing of the last 0.78 meters of the chassis) (REF C). Some delegation members believe these procedures confuse the concepts of "conversion" and "elimination" by characterizing as "elimination" procedures designed to "convert" mobile ICBM launchers into vehicles used for other military or civilian purposes not inconsistent with the new START Follow-on (SFO) treaty and such that the "conversion" is considered to be sufficiently permanent to allow the item to no longer be subject to the treaty. The Russian side argues that the

elimination procedures proposed by the United States are overly burdensome to the Russian Federation. The Russian side asserts as well that simplified elimination procedures could effectively render the launcher incapable of launching ICBMs; could be verified by national technical means (NTM); and could be accomplished without requiring the presence of U.S. inspectors during the conversion or elimination process. (REFS E and F)

¶6. (S) The Russian side's most recent proposal would require only removal or destruction of the launcher-erector mechanism, or other procedures developed by the Party carrying out the elimination, which would be demonstrated only if the other Party raised an objection. Current U.S. guidance does not include this option for mobile ICBM launchers. The Russian proposal does not require agreement by the other Party to one's planned conversion or elimination procedures, only that the Party planning to implement the new procedures attempt to persuade the other Party of its effectiveness. The Russian side claims they intend to use eliminated mobile ICBM launchers for various purposes, including as cranes to support construction and to lay oil pipe; therefore, they do not want to remove the stabilizing jacks or cut off the last 0.78 meters off the chassis from the residual vehicle. (REF F)

¶7. (S) START and both the U.S.- and Russian-proposed approaches for SFO would allow the vehicle remaining after "elimination" of the launcher to be used only for purposes not inconsistent with the treaty. But, because the launcher is "eliminated," there is no further monitoring of the remaining vehicle upon completion of the elimination process. Some delegation members propose to distinguish between conversion and elimination measures to be applied to mobile ICBM launchers similar to the U.S.-proposed conversion procedures for nuclear heavy bombers converted to non-nuclear heavy bombers.

¶8. (S) In an effort to reach agreement on conversion or elimination procedures for mobile ICBM launchers while maintaining an effective verification regime, some delegation members have developed an alternative approach for conversion of mobile launchers of ICBMs. The alternative approach would provide a more stringent elimination procedure for mobile

launchers that could be verified by NTM, and add a new conversion procedure designed to allow the converting Party to render the launcher incapable of launching an ICBM, while allowing use of the remaining vehicle for purposes not inconsistent with the treaty, but in a fashion not sufficiently permanent to be considered an elimination. The remaining converted launcher would remain subject to provisions of the treaty in order to guard against reconversion in a fashion similar to procedures being negotiated regarding converted heavy bombers. These procedures would provide Russia flexibility for conversion of mobile ICBM launchers while offering protection against any attempt to re-convert the former mobile launcher, by requiring the Russian Federation to: 1) report the location of the converted launchers in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); and 2) provide the opportunity for exhibitions of the converted items. If Russia adopts this approach, we will need to develop exhibition procedures for items that may be

at facilities not normally subject to inspections, possibly at remote sites, and possibly under the control of organizations that have no connection to the Russian military.

ELIMINATION

¶9. S) Some delegation members propose a more stringent elimination procedure for mobile launchers of ICBMs that would build on the current provisions calling for removal of the mountings of the erector-launcher mechanism and the launcher leveling supports. The new procedure would also require the vehicle chassis be cut into two roughly equal sections. Eliminated mobile launchers for ICBMs would remain in the open to be verified by NTM for a specified period of time following elimination. This approach, while significantly more demanding than the currently-proposed procedures, would be verifiable by NTM and should obviate the need for any form of U.S. on-site inspection. Other delegation members believe the current U.S.-proposed elimination concept and procedures (removal and destruction of the launcher-erector mechanism, cutting off the leveling jacks, and cutting off 0.78 meters for the chassis) render the vehicle incapable of launching an ICBM and, therefore, do not need to be tracked in the MOU or inspected after confirmation of elimination.

CONVERSION

¶10. (S) The new conversion procedure would use many of the procedures from the current U.S.-proposed process for elimination, including removal of the mountings of the erector-launcher mechanism and cutting off a portion of the self-propelled launcher chassis aft of the rear axle that is at least 0.78 meters in length at a location not obviously a joint. Mobile launchers for ICBMs being converted would be subject to the central limit on strategic delivery vehicles until the completion of the conversion process was verified by inspector observation of the final cut removing the erector-launcher mechanism. Converted mobile launchers for ICBMs would remain subject to the broader limitations of the treaty indefinitely. That is, the converted ICBM launchers could be listed in the MOU as strategic offensive arms (SOA) converted for purposes other than employing nuclear armaments, and would remain subject to possible exhibition at the request of the other Party to guard against re-conversion. This new approach draws upon the methodology used for conversion of SSGNs or heavy bombers to render them incapable of being used for its original purpose while still allowing the launcher to be used for various military or civilian purposes not inconsistent with the SFO treaty, but where the procedures are no sufficiently permanent to be considered elimination.

SPLIT RECOMMENDATIO

¶11. (S) Some delegatio members believe the revised

procedures proposed above could provide effective verification of mobile ICBM launcher conversion and elimination and may provide a solid basis for agreement on these procedures with the Russians, in part because the proposed procedures are consistent with the types of steps that have already been accepted for the conversion of SSBNs and heavy bombers and are responsive to the major concerns the Russian side has raised. However, other delegation members believe there is a risk that the proposed conversation process for mobile launchers of ICBMs will be difficult, if not impossible, to monitor because if the conversion process is similar to the U.S. conversion process for heavy bombers, there is no current requirement to list the location of the launchers in the MOU or update the MOU with notifications of the movement of the converted launchers. Even if the launchers were listed in the MOU and updated with notifications, it would require monitoring many areas not normally monitored for military equipment and identifying individual equipment located with similar equipment not covered by the treaty.

GUIDANCE REQUESTED

¶12. (S) The delegation requests that Washington evaluate the proposal of revised procedures for the conversion and elimination of mobile launchers for ICBMs and provide guidance to the delegation on how to proceed.

¶13. (U) Gottemoeller sends.
GRIFFITHS